

# Academic Library Trends in Conflict Zones

Baheya Jaber<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>The University of Alabama, USA

bsjaber@crimson.ua.edu

## ABSTRACT

Academic libraries operating in conflict zones especially in Palestine and neighboring countries are involved in transitioning from traditional models to improve their libraries' services and satisfy patron demand. The researcher reviewed the latest trends, the library and information science (LIS) literature in academic librarianship, and identified three trends to enhance their customer service component. The critical analysis emphasized building a model that focused on creating a comfortable and collaborative place for library patrons to satisfy their information needs. Local authority, political, economic, and cultural knowledge will enable selected trends to be embraced by librarians in conflict zones, and minimize their unintended negative consequences.

*Keywords:* LIS Education, Academic Libraries, Conflict Zones, Critical Analysis, Emerging Trends, Palestine

## TOPICS

education; curriculum; pedagogy

## INTRODUCTION

Rapid development in information technology, changes in higher education's teaching methods, and students' evolving needs (CSV Consulting, 2006) are impacting academic libraries operating in conflict zones. These libraries are involved in the transition process from traditional models of library practice, and are searching for the best models of practice to utilize, to improve their libraries' services to satisfy patron demand (Britto, 2011). This paper examines academic library trends, with specific attention given to libraries operating in Palestine and neighboring countries, and it will provide a better understanding of these trends in conflict zones.

## METHOD

The researcher conducted an analytical-critical method which is the analysis of a discourse, it aimed to revealing and critiquing assumptions made from positions of economic and historical privilege. Content analysis and literature review of published works on the emerging trends in academic librarianship (C&RL, 2016) served as the basis for predicting future improvements to establish a norm for what libraries might be attempting to become.

## **ACADEMIC LIBRARY TRENDS**

The academic library trends included the library commons approach, community involvement, and collection assessment. These trends were published by the Library and Information Science (LIS) literature such as the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) 2016 (C&RL News, 2016), and other resources by (Dahlkild, 2011), (Forrest & Halbert, 2009), and (Schwartz, 2013). This review focused on how these trends can be utilized in conflict zones, the challenges that academic librarians serving in conflict zones encountered, and how they could effectively manage these challenges.

## **ACADEMIC LIBRARY TRENDS MODEL IN CONFLICT ZONES**

The critical analysis of the literature were used to build an authentic model that focused on creating a comfortable and collaborative place for library patrons to facilitate their use of place and technology, to satisfy their needs, and provided for the growth of these libraries and the academic institutions they serve (Woodward, 2009).

The authentic model is called “Academic library trends model in conflict zones”. It aimed to establish a critical model for applying the selected library trends, genuine to the realities of conflict zones. Depending on the experience of the researcher as an academic librarian, she selected the trends most applicable for implementation by academic librarians operating in conflict zones (Jaber, 2017).

## **AUTHENTIC LIBRARY TRENDS MODEL IN CONFLICT ZONES**

The authentic library trends model consisted of ten steps for authenticating library trends: identify a trend in librarianship, find the normative statements in that trend, identify the historic and economic privilege hidden in those norms, identify the distinct challenges existing in a particular conflict zone, communicate directly with local experts or consult scholarly/professional literature produced by local experts, identify internal and external factors, develop best practices for mitigating internal factors with the purpose that resolving internal factors will help resolve external factors by including both factors as part of the strategic planning of the academic institution, communicate the authentic trends with other librarians, archivists and LIS in conflict zones, implement the authentic trend, and assess the implementation of the authentic trend (Jaber, 2017).

Each authenticated trend which implemented this model explored the internal and external barriers that forbid academic libraries in conflict zones from applying these trends (Beiraghi, 2012); (Landgraf, 2017); (Qureshi, 2009), the suggestions to control these barriers (Agresta, 2014); (Ewanyshyn, 2007); (Stieg, 1992), (Stieg, 1994), with special awareness to academic libraries in Palestine and its neighboring countries (Bergan, 2000); (Watson, Hollister, Stroud, & Babcock, 2011).

## **RESULTS**

This paper found that the library trend discourse did not consider the realities of conflict zones, the similarities of library services in conflict zones require more research, and domestic librarians established creative solutions to provide library services in conflict zones, and so, should feel empowered to critique these trends by merging their knowledge of emerging trends of LIS profession with domestic institutional awareness and regional focus.

This paper is the first to be conducted about academic libraries located in conflict zones, the critical analysis of the three most applicable academic library trends facilitated building an authentic model to improve the services offered by librarians, to meet the needs of local users, and to help facilitate the libraries transition from traditional to digital places. Furthermore, emphasizing local authority along with political, economic, and cultural knowledge will enable select academic library trends to be embraced by librarians in conflict zones and minimize unintended negative consequences associated with those trends.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

Recommendations included suggestions to assist solve the internal obstacles that academic librarians in conflict zones face, increase communities awareness in conflict zones, reinforce collaborative efforts, and future research projects. These will identify steps to take to ensure that awareness of these emerging trends and resulting actions to take to utilize these trends are available to libraries and librarians operating in conflict zones.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS TO LIS EDUCATION**

This paper contributed to the current trends in academic librarianship by focusing on three of the latest trends that can be applied in conflict zones. By examining the political, economic and technological deficiencies in these areas, academic librarians in conflict zones are aware of these trends and are working to assist library patrons to satisfy their information needs, and to help them transition from traditional to digital spaces. Thus, this is reflected in the LIS education where LIS faculty, students, library practitioners, and patrons need to be educated about these issues and to be able to apply them to different scenarios.

The researcher who is an academic library practitioner in conflict zones specifically in Palestine, a current PhD student in the U.S., and a future faculty in the U.S. or Palestine, is combining all these academic librarianship experiences to bring a unique curriculum for education through this study. Additionally, the researcher is conducting a current study where she started to study the ACRL 2018 emerging trends, specifically fake news and information literacy.

The researcher is continuing to share the potential about the significant role of LIS educators to outreach and provide information literacy in a traditional and a non-traditional classroom settings. Academic librarians are proactive by being involved in the outreach programs to serving the higher education mission, by responding to the call of the development of information technology, to satisfy patrons evolving needs.

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